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**ADDRESS**

TO THE

**CHRISTIAN PUBLIC,**

ESPECIALLY TO THE

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS

OF THE

PRESBYTERIAN, REFORMED DUTCH, AND  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES,

THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

**PROPOSED UNION**

BETWEEN THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AND THE

UNITED FOREIGN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

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BOSTON: CROCKER AND BREWSTER. NEW-YORK: JOHN P. HAVEN.

1826.

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## ADDRESS.

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AT the late annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, which was held at Northampton in September, a proposal was made by the Managers of the United Foreign Missionary Society, for an amalgamation of the two institutions; or, in other words, for a union of all the friends of both institutions, in such a manner that their missionary efforts might be conducted under one organization. This proposal was offered by the Rev. Dr. McAuley, the Rev. Dr. McMurray, and the Rev. Mr. Crane, as a Committee appointed by the Managers for that purpose, and was received by the Board in the most respectful and fraternal manner. In the discussions, relating to so important a measure, all who were present seemed to have the same object at heart; viz. *the direction of the Christian energies of this country, so as to communicate, in the most speedy and effectual manner, the greatest amount of blessings to the heathen world.* The measure itself was warmly approved; and the following terms of union were unanimously adopted, every member present, both of the Board, and of the Committee from the United Foreign Missionary Society, distinctly expressing his concurrence in them.

*Preliminary terms in contemplation of union.*—"As the amalgamation of the two societies cannot be completed till after it shall have received the sanction of the highest judicatories in the Presbyterian Church and the Reformed

Dutch Church, which cannot take place before the meeting of those bodies in May next, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions on the one part, and the Commissioners of the United Foreign Missionary Society on the other part, agree to these five preliminary articles, viz.

“1. A document shall be issued jointly by the Prudential Committee of this Board, and by the Directors of the United Foreign Missionary Society, as soon as it can be conveniently prepared, stating and explaining in what sense the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions is a National Institution; how it is organized; the reasons for hoping and believing, that this organization will continue to receive the confidence of the Christian community; and the reasons which have had weight in promoting the contemplated union.

“2. During the interval, which must elapse between the present time and May next, the Directors of the United Foreign Missionary Society will make all practicable exertions to replenish its Treasury; so that, should the proposed union take place, the engagements to be assumed by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions may be as few and as small as possible.

“3. The Directors of the United Foreign Missionary Society will correspond with the missionaries under its care, explaining to them the proposed union, and advising them, if the measure should be adopted, to transfer their relation to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

“4. The Directors of the United Foreign Missionary Society will direct the missionaries of the several stations, not to enter upon any new measures involving expense, and generally to practice the strictest economy, till the result of this proposed measure shall be known.

“5. As the Directors of the United Foreign Missionary Society contemplate sending an agent to visit the stations west of the Mississippi, the Prudential Committee will, if practicable, send an agent also to accompany him, and ascertain from personal inspection, the condition of these stations.”

*Permanent terms of union.*—"The following principles are adopted as the basis of the proposed union, which principles, when consented to by the United Foreign Missionary Society, and the judicatories above referred to, shall thenceforward be binding on both societies:

"1. The missionaries now in the employment of the United Foreign Missionary Society shall, if their character and standing remain unimpeached, be received as missionaries of the Board; and, if any of them should be unwilling to enter into this new relation, they shall be at liberty to retire from the stations which they now occupy.

"2. The property, of every kind, belonging to the United Foreign Missionary Society, whether at the missionary stations, or elsewhere, shall be transferred to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, on the ratification of this union.

"3. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions will assume all the engagements of the United Foreign Missionary Society, as they shall stand at the time of said ratification; it being understood, however, that the fourth preliminary article shall have been complied with.

"4. In the election of members according to the provisions of its charter; in the appointment of missionaries, occasional agents, and other functionaries; and in the administration of all its concerns; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions will endeavor to merit the high character of a truly National Institution, and to acquire and retain the affections and confidence of all classes of persons, who have heretofore aided either of these societies, and of all others who may wish to promote the salvation of the heathen.

"5. As the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has heretofore consisted, with few exceptions, of persons belonging to the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, and Congregational churches: and as its national character will always ensure the election of a competent and satisfactory number of persons from these religious communities, the Board will send to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, the General Synod of the Reformed Dutch Church, and the

several General Associations in the New England States, as many copies of its Annual Report, and other printed documents, as shall be sufficient to furnish each member of these Bodies with a copy; not only as a token of respect, but that means of information may be afforded in regard to the measures of the Board and its missionaries, and to any success which God may grant to its exertions.

“6. The highest judicatories of the Presbyterian Church and of the Reformed Dutch Church will recommend the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, as a National Institution, and entitled to the warm support and efficient patronage of the churches under their respective jurisdictions.

“7. The periodical publications of the Board shall be sent gratuitously to all societies and individuals, now entitled to the periodical publications of the United Foreign Missionary Society; and, on the ratification of this union, the Missionary Herald shall take the place of the Missionary Register.”

According to the stipulation contained in the first of the preliminary articles above-recited, the Prudential Committee of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and the Managers of the United Foreign Missionary Society, now issue these pages, as the common document there described. Pursuing the plan of the article, they proceed, without further introduction, to inquire,

I. *In what sense the Board is a National Institution.*

It was a prominent design of the public spirited men, by whom the foreign missionary enterprises of this country were commenced, that the institution, which they formed, should be truly national in its character. The first election of members, under the act of incorporation, was made with this design full in view. The Board previously consisted of eleven members. At the election here referred to, thirteen additional members were chosen. These thirteen, taken collectively, resided in seven states of the union, and belonged to all those religious denominations, from which a general co-operation in missionary efforts, conducted under one organi-



zation, could be expected. In subsequent elections, during a period of thirteen years, the same object has been regarded. Of the forty-two members, who now compose the Board, one resides in India, and the rest in nine states of the union; viz. in five of the New England states, with New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

At the annual meeting in 1819, gentlemen were elected, in nearly all the remaining states, as well as in Europe and the East, to act as *Corresponding Members*, whose counsel and patronage might promote the common object; and, two years later, a provision was introduced, by which persons are admitted as *Honorary Members*, on their making a specified donation to the Treasury of the Board. Both these classes of members, though they do not form a part of the corporate body, are invited to join in the deliberations of the annual meetings. In these ways, a fair representation of the friends of missions is obtained, the advice of intelligent men is received from a distance, and a suitable respect is paid to others, whose conduct has evinced their deep interest in the welfare of the institution. With regard to the future, there is nothing, either in the act of incorporation, or in any decision of the Board, to prevent the election of as many members from different parts of the country, as the interests of the missionary cause may require.

Thus designed to be national, in its reliance upon the experience, wisdom, and tried character of eminent individuals in all parts of the country, the Board has acquired the same character, to a remarkable extent, in the patronage which it has enjoyed. Though much the greater part of its resources has uniformly been derived from New England, many liberal benefactors have been found in the middle, southern, and western states.

If the contemplated union should receive the sanction of the ecclesiastical bodies to which it is referred, the patronage from many parts of the country will be greater, it may safely be presumed, than at any previous time.

It cannot be expected, however, that this institution will receive the patronage of all the denominations of

Christians in our country, in the same manner as the Bible Society does. It will be considered rather as under the direction and peculiar patronage of those denominations, from which both institutions have hitherto derived their principal support. From these religious communities the missionaries will be selected as heretofore; and to these communities must the public look for directors, executive officers, missionaries, assistant missionaries, and agents of every kind. Individuals of other denominations may probably hereafter make this Board the channel of their beneficence to the heathen, as they have done in time past; though without any expectation of altering the general plan of its operations, or interfering with its management. One of the earliest contributors to the funds of the Board, and, considering his circumstances, the most liberal contributor who has hitherto appeared, was a Baptist. The present venerable President of the American Bible Society, and the generous agent of the Board at Calcutta, though Episcopalians, are members and patrons. The latter has cheerfully and spontaneously rendered very essential services to the American missions in the east. Quite recently an association has been formed in aid of the Board, by Episcopalians belonging to St. Paul's church, Boston; with the express reservation, however, that they will be at liberty to send their annual contributions to a Missionary Society of their own denomination, whenever they shall think proper to do so.

With these explanations, considering that Congregationalists and Presbyterians of different names constitute a large part of the inhabitants in almost every city and populous town in the United States; that they are a great majority of all the inhabitants in many large districts; that, taking the whole country together, they are probably the largest denominations of Christians, both in regard to numbers and wealth; and that, if the proposed union should be consummated, they would look upon this Board as their only organ of sending the Gospel to the unevangelized world; and considering, also, that many zealous and public spirited individuals, of other religious denominations, will avail themselves of the



facilities afforded by this Board for conveying their contributions to reclaim the earth from moral desolation; it can hardly be thought presumption by any one, to speak of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions as a National Institution.

II. The subject of inquiry next in order is, *In what manner the Board is organized?* This question will be answered by the following statement.

In the month of June 1810, it was announced, that four young men, who were then members of the Theological Seminary in Andover, seriously contemplated devoting themselves to the service of Christ, as missionaries to the heathen. This interesting fact was stated to the General Association of Massachusetts, then in session, and the young men were invited to appear before that body. They appeared accordingly; explained their views; and, in effect, if not literally, implored of Christians in our country, the means of obtaining access to the pagan world.

After deliberating on the subject, the General Association appointed a Committee of five gentlemen in Massachusetts, and four in Connecticut, to take charge of this great concern; and 'to devise ways and means, and adopt measures, for promoting the spread of the Gospel in heathen lands.' To this Committee the present name of the Board was given.

In September of the same year, the nine persons, who had been thus selected, were invited to meet. A majority convened; a constitution was formed; and the Board was organized.

The General Association of Connecticut, at the next meeting, which was in June 1811, approved of these measures; and appointed the same gentlemen in that state, as had been first appointed by the General Association of Massachusetts. This latter body repeated the appointment of five persons; and it was then supposed, that the Board would be perpetuated by annual appointments made in these ecclesiastical bodies. The institution was then in its infancy. There had been no developement of its powers. The donations

actually received into its Treasury amounted to but a small sum. No missionary operations had been commenced.

In the mean time, a legacy of *thirty thousand dollars* had been left to the Board, by the late Mrs. Norris of Salem, who died in April 1811. As the Board was not incorporated, an expensive lawsuit of four years duration was necessary, before the legacy could be recovered; all which time the money lay unproductive in the hands of the executor, who could neither pay it, nor make any use of it, till the question was legally decided. The fact that so large a legacy was at hazard, merely for want of an act of incorporation, made the friends of missions very desirous that similar embarrassments should not exist in future. Application was therefore preferred to the legislature of Massachusetts for a charter, by which the Board might receive and hold property, under the protection of law. Such a charter was obtained in the month of June 1812, and served to increase that public confidence in the Board, which had already been expressed in a very unequivocal manner.

In so important a measure as framing an act of incorporation, very able legal advisers were consulted. It was apparent, that the form, which the Board at first received, could not be preserved under a legal organization. The General association of Massachusetts is merely a voluntary association, not known to the laws. The same is true of the smaller associations, which are the constituent bodies, whose delegates compose the General Association. The appointments of such merely voluntary associations, could not be legally recognized, unless the associations themselves were first legally defined; or, in other words, unless all these constituent bodies were first incorporated. This was not desired by any one; and, if it had been desired, there is no reason to think it would have been practicable.

But had it been practicable to obtain an act, which should have given a legal form to all these ecclesiastical bodies, and should have prescribed that the members of the Board should be annually elected by the General Associations of

Massachusetts and Connecticut; it may be doubted whether the Christian public would have deemed it suitable, that all the members of such a corporation, which was designed to act in behalf of multitudes residing in every part of our widely extended country, should be annually chosen by two independent bodies, composed of men who reside in only two States of the Union. It is to be remembered, that these independent bodies are composed of clergymen only, and are changed almost wholly every year, being the representatives of numerous other independent bodies, composed only of clergymen.

When the Act of Incorporation was obtained, there seemed to be but three ways, in which the members of the corporate body could be designated; viz. either by enacting that all persons, who might subscribe a certain constitution, or compact, should be members; or that all, who should pay a certain sum of money to the Treasury, should enjoy this privilege; or that individuals, named in the act, should be authorized to elect associates and successors, who should in the same manner perpetuate the Board. The last of these methods was adopted, for the following reasons.

1. This organization is analogous to that, which was first chosen by the promoters of missions from this country to the distant heathen. The prominent design, so far as relates to the *form* of the Board, was, that these interesting concerns should be committed to the management of a comparatively small number of men. Hence the epithet *Commissioners*, which, however inconvenient as an appendage to the name, clearly denotes, that the persons who bear it, were appointed to act for others. As the charter does not, and could not, provide for this delegated character, by recognizing it in form, all that remains for the Board is, to secure it in fact, by electing such associates, as will be a fair representation of the friends of missions.

2. The present organization of the Board, renders that body a real representation of the Christian community. If membership were acquired by subscribing a constitution, or making a small pecuniary donation, the members present at

an annual meeting would consist principally of the inhabitants of the place, where the meeting was held. If it were held from year to year in the same place, the Board would be regarded as the missionary society of that place, and not of the country at large. If the annual meetings were held at different places in rotation, the members actually present at any one of the meetings, would, with few exceptions, be absent from the succeeding meeting; so that there would not be even *the appearance of identity*; and the Board, instead of being a virtual representation of the Christian community, would be one year a small part of that community, assembled in one place, and the next year a distinct part of the same community, assembled in another place. Members, residing at even a moderate distance, would not feel any obligation to be present, or any responsibility for measures adopted.

3. The constitution of the Board is such, that a real supervision of the doings of the executive functionaries is exercised annually, and an efficient control is held in regard to every important measure. But it is obvious that a large society, assembled to hear parts of a Report and listen to addresses, could not enter into details of business, or give any advice on doubtful or difficult subjects. The great use of annual meetings in such a society would be, to awaken benevolent feelings, and prompt to corresponding exertions. But the members of this Board assemble once a year, examine the doings of those whom they have appointed to manage its concerns, and, after deliberation and discussion, fix upon certain great principles, which serve as landmarks, in future plans and movements. Residing in different parts of the country, and knowing the wishes and feelings of contributors to the Board, in their respective vicinities, they can make any inquiries, or propose any measures, which the state of things may render expedient. The number of members not being large, the meetings are held from day to day, as long as a majority think expedient, and always till the important business has been transacted.

The next general subject of inquiry is,



III. *The reasons for hoping and believing, that the present organization of the Board will continue to enjoy the confidence of the Christian community.*

Some of these reasons are the following:

1. If, as is thought to be the case, the constitution of the Board is eminently fitted for the superintendence of missionary concerns, the religious public will not be ignorant of it. The mass of the people, so far as they are favorably inclined toward the object of missions, wish simply for the most convenient channel for the communication of their beneficence to the heathen world. Modes and forms of association are immaterial in their view; and, if they see the management of missionary concerns entrusted, systematically and permanently, to men of experience and known character, they will repose as much confidence in the Board, under its present organization, as they would repose in a body, whose members were annually elected by the votes of all contributors, (were such an election practicable,) and as much as should ever be reposed in any institution merely human.

2. The principles, on which members have been elected hitherto, are calculated to sustain the public confidence. A considerable proportion of the members were Presidents of Colleges, or Professors in Theological Seminaries, at the time of their election; and more than one fourth part of the present members sustain one or the other of these relations. It need not be said, that gentlemen in these important and responsible stations, are extensively known and highly esteemed. They are also more likely, than any others, to be intimately acquainted with the character of the missionaries. Another class is composed of venerable men, both among the clergy and laity, who have arrived at an advanced period of life, have discharged numerous public duties, and are not even suspected of valuing the little distinction, which is implied in a selection to these services, except as it may enable them to serve God in their declining days, and to bear a distinct testimony to the excellence of the missionary cause. A small number, of middle age, residing near each other, have been selected to manage the executive business



of the Board; and others, in the same period of life, distinguished for their active exertions in behalf of charitable objects, and residing in different parts of the union, have been associated in this body.

It is to be understood that the Board would not think of electing a member, whatever his standing or influence, who was not supposed to be a warm friend of missions, and of experimental religion, and a believer in those cardinal doctrines of the New Testament, which are sometimes called the doctrines of the Reformation.\*

3. The same causes which have led to the selection of such members, as were thought likely to be acceptable to friends of missions generally, and to require and retain their confidence, will always exist, and will almost necessarily produce the same effects. It was once well observed by Dr. Worcester, whose memory is greatly to be honored, that the support of missions is "WHOLLY A MATTER OF CONFIDENCE." There must be confidence on the part of the public, in the Board and its functionaries, at home and

\* During the fifteen years and a half since the Board was formed, fifteen members have died. Their names, arranged according to the States in which they resided, are as follows:

MAINE. Rev. Jesse Appleton, D. D., President of Bowdoin College.

NEW-HAMPSHIRE. Hon. John Langdon, Governor of the State.

Rev. Seth Payson, D. D.

Hon. Thomas W. Thompson, Senator in Congress.

MASSACHUSETTS. Rev. Samuel Spring, D. D. a Member of the Prudential Committee from the origin of the Board till his death.

Rev. Zephaniah Swift Moore, D. D., President of Williams College, and subsequently of Amherst Collegiate Institution.

Rev. Samuel Worcester, D. D., First Corresponding Secretary of the Board, in which office he continued till his death.

RHODE ISLAND. Hon. William Jones, Governor of the State.

CONNECTICUT. Gen. Jedidiah Huntington.

Hon. John Treadwell, Governor of the State.

Rev. Timothy Dwight, D. D., President of Yale College.

NEW-YORK. Col. John Lincklaen.

Divie Bethune, Esq.

NEW-JERSEY. Hon. Elias Boudinot, L.L. D., First President of the American Bible Society.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA. Elias Boudinot Caldwell, Esq. Clerk of the Supreme Court of the United States.

To persons acquainted with the public and private character of leading men in the religious community, not a word need be said respecting this list of names.

abroad; confidence on the part of the Board, in its functionaries, and in the patronage and support of the friends of missions; confidence on the part of missionaries, in the Board and the Christian community; and confidence on the part of those, who conduct the executive business of the institution, in the candour, intelligence, and steady zeal of their associates of the Board, and of the multitude of their Christian brethren. All this confidence is necessary to the prompt and successful prosecution of the missionary work: If the public were to withdraw confidence in the Board, resources could not be found for carrying on the present system of operations for three months. We are not to suppose, however, that such a calamity will be suffered to take place without cause; and we trust in the protecting care of the Lord of missions to prevent the existence of any cause, which should forfeit a confidence so long enjoyed, and on which so much is depending. But it is more to the design of this argument to say, that if the members of the Board have any regard for the success of the cause, in which they are embarked;—if they feel any responsibility for the stewardship, which is placed in their hands;—if they wish to sustain any reputation for integrity and consistency;—they will aim to secure the best and most durable interest in the affections of the people of God, *by doing what is right*, and leaving the issue to His disposal.

4. The organization of the Board is of such a nature, as to make its functionaries feel a double responsibility. All agents for religious charities must feel a responsibility to the public, so far as their doings attract public attention; and, in regard to missionary societies, the public ultimately know all that is material in their operations. But in large popular societies, nothing can be done at the meetings other than to make public statements, which must be received without examination; whereas, at the annual meetings of the Board, all the doings of the Committee are brought under review. And this review is taken by men, who do not act in their private capacity, or as friends of the cause merely, but who are selected for this special service; who have regularly

attended to the same duties for a series of years; who are familiar with the details of the business; and who wish for information, both on their own account, and that they may communicate it to others. Perhaps no plan has yet been devised more favorable to a due feeling of responsibility, than the one which has been here described, and which received its form from peculiar circumstances, under the control of divine providence, without a distinct anticipation, on the part of its promoters, of all the advantages, which have since been realized.

But should the wisdom of the Christian community discover practicable improvements of the plan, there is no reason why they should not be adopted. The subject may therefore be left to the judgment and integrity of those, who may have the direction of these concerns in future years. It need not be doubted, that, if the Christian church is faithful to itself and its Lord, a succession of devoted men will be provided by Him, to act in behalf of their brethren for the benefit of the perishing nations.

IV. The only remaining topic of the present discussion is an enumeration of *the reasons which have had weight in promoting the contemplated union.*

These reasons are numerous, and might be urged at considerable length, and by many powerful considerations. They are simple, however, and easily understood, and commend themselves equally to the mind and heart.

1. *The Board is unlimited in its design.*

It was originally intended to become a channel, in which the blessings of the Gospel might be conveyed to any part of the unevangelized world. All the pagan nations, whether residing upon our own continent, or beyond the ocean, were regarded as within the scope of American beneficence. So far as resources should be afforded, and Providence should open the way to fields of missionary labor, the heralds of mercy were to proceed in every direction. And they have proceeded to the aboriginal tribes of our country;—to different places in Asia, remote from each other;—to Polynesia;—to South America;—and measures are taken to send others

to Africa. This being the case, it would seem desirable, that those Christians who are united in their belief of essential doctrines, and who do not differ greatly in their views of church government, or in regard to the qualifications for admission to the holy ordinances of religion, should have their efforts concentrated in a work, which is large enough to employ the energies of all, and whose importance can never be adequately estimated. One society, with a respectable income, can certainly prosecute a great work more vigorously, than two societies, with the same income divided between them.

2. *The operations of the Board are various.*

As the missionary cause is obliged to contend against the apathy, avarice, and prejudice of nominal Christians; the slander and intolerance of infidels and scoffers; and the remaining selfishness, and ignorance, and narrow views of many true disciples of our Lord; it becomes important that a missionary society should possess every advantage, which fair argument and unquestionable facts will furnish, for maintaining so arduous a struggle. In order to this, it is necessary that the same society should have the charge of different missions, in remote regions, in diverse circumstances, and carrying forward numerous and diverse operations. All missions are not equally prosperous; all are not equally interesting; and it is according to the plan of God's administration, that we should not be able to foresee the immediate result of our labors. Discouragements are sometimes great and long continued. But when missionary stations are numerous, a part of them are almost always experiencing, one after another, peculiar tokens of the divine favor. The weak faith of timid Christians is thus kept from sinking; and the arms of the strongest are nerved for severer labor. That the greatest encouragement may be derived from success, however, it is necessary that each contributor should feel that his own contribution has aided somewhat in producing it. Who that patronized the mission at the Sandwich Islands, for instance, does not rejoice, that, in the merciful



providence of his Heavenly Father, he was favored with such an opportunity.

Among the infinitely varying predilections of men, individuals will be found, who wish to aid some missions in preference to others. This propensity, which is capable of producing valuable results, should be gratified, so far as it can be done without injury to the general cause. The fact, therefore, that a missionary society has under its care a variety of evangelical operations, and that it has laborers actually employed among heathens in different continents and islands, and among Mohammedans and Jews, will tend powerfully to attract notice, and to draw forth patronage. Indeed, the accurate observer of the rise and progress of religious charities in our country, will not hesitate to say, that the sending of missionaries from among ourselves for the conversion of idolaters, in distant and populous regions of the earth, gave a greater impulse to Christian beneficence, than has been given in any other manner, and by all other evangelical exertions. In this way it has come to pass, that so much greater zeal has been felt, than ever before since the days of Elliot, for the salvation of the American aborigines. This was what led, more than any thing else, to the formation of Education Societies. When it was seen and felt, that the *field is the world*, and that laborers were imperiously demanded for every part of this immense field, the inquiry naturally arose, *How is our own country to be supplied with spiritual laborers? and what ought to be done to repair the moral desolations of our Zion?* The same effect has been produced in Great Britain, and by the same cause.

And, since it is perfectly natural, and perfectly justifiable, for contributors to missionary enterprises, especially for the most liberal and self-denying of these benefactors of mankind, to wish *to have some agency in all the good that is done*, how gratifying to one of these persons it must be, as he reads of the conversion of American Indians, and Sandwich Islanders, and Hindoos, or traces a missionary tract as it winds its way to the shores of the Caspian, or



passes over the Gaults from the Coromandel coast, or casts a gleam of light upon the dark mind of the Polynesian savage, to reflect, that in all these works of mercy his humble offering had some share.

### 3. *The proposed union will save time and labor.*

This assertion is so obvious as to require little illustration. Two societies must have two executive committees, two secretaries, at least as many assistant secretaries, two treasurers, and two sets of agents. Much of this labor may be saved by merging two institutions into one. To every person acquainted with the real state of things, this is a very weighty consideration. The man, who attends an auxiliary missionary meeting once a year, at the expense of half a day's time, may regard it as a small matter to conduct missionary operations. But in point of fact, it is a very arduous and difficult matter; and this should be well known and understood by the Christian public. It is not easy to find, in any city of the American union, a sufficient number of suitable men to form active and laborious committees for existing societies;—men, who shall, amidst all their private and professional engagements, hold themselves ready to attend weekly meetings, or to be called together on any emergency. What then shall be said respecting those functionaries, whose whole time is demanded for their respective offices? How are men to be obtained, as a permanent thing, for these agencies in two institutions? Without saying any thing respecting the competency, or incompetency, of the present incumbents, it may be said boldly, that the American churches should see to it, that the best talents and attainments, which the country can furnish, during all future years, have the charge of this momentous business. Let it be remembered that, as a people, we are in great want of able men for the management of public-spirited measures; not because our country is destitute of such men, but because the stations which require them are very numerous, and are multiplying every day. Is one of our colleges in want of a President? or one of our theological seminaries in want of a Professor? A suitable man may perhaps be found, by

searching the land from one end to the other; but the difficulty lies in the fact, that, in all probability, he cannot be spared from the station which he now occupies; and, if he could, he would be called to half a dozen other important stations, if there were any hope of obtaining him. This state of things renders *economy in the employment of competent men*, a public and imperious duty.

There are those who, for want of knowledge on the subject, think that any man of good character for integrity may be taken and coerced into these services. If such a course of proceeding were proper and just, who has this power of coercion? We may indeed find men in most of our cities, each of whom will say, "I am willing to give my *five hundred dollars a year*, or my *thousand dollars a year*, for religious charities;" and there are those, each of whom might add, "I am willing to *rise early, and sit up late, and eat the bread of carefulness*, that I may have the ability of doing this;" and yet each of these liberal men would feel compelled to add, "I cannot give my whole time, nor half my time, to any of these charitable objects, nor to all of them conjoined."

4. *The proposed union will also save expense.*

This is apparent from what has been already said. But when it is considered, that if two institutions, having the same object in view, continue their separate operations, there will be a necessity of sending agents from both to the same parts of the county; that, in many instances, two journies to the western wilderness will be required, where one would otherwise answer every purpose; and that the contingent expenses of two separate establishments must be defrayed;—it will appear, that this is a subject of no trifling consequence.

5. *There is no necessity that the two institutions should remain distinct.*

The members of both agree essentially in their views of Christian doctrine. They employ the same sort of men for missionaries;—men who were educated in the same schools, preach the same great truths in the same manner, are per-

sonally acquainted with each other, and are closely bound together by ties of friendship and of Christian affection. They rely upon the efficacy of a Saviour's blood for the pardon of their own sins; and they present to perishing men of all classes the atonement of an almighty Redeemer, applied by the new-creating Spirit, as the only ground of hope, the only way to holiness and to God.

It is to be remembered also, that the patrons and supporters of both institutions harmonize, almost without an exception, in their religious belief. Many individuals send their contributions to both; and many others feel a deep interest in the success of both. In short, there is as perfect a union on this subject, among those who believe in experimental religion, as perhaps ever existed among so many individuals on any subject of common interest;—a union, which will enable them to act together with the greatest cheerfulness and energy. If we can suppose, that the missionaries should hereafter cease to preach Jesus Christ and him crucified; and if they should preach any other Gospel than that which Paul preached;—the support now derived from the Christian community would immediately fail.

6. *Such a union will remove the danger of collision.*

If these institutions should continue their separate existence and operations, there will be constant danger of interference;—a danger, which no human wisdom, prudence, or piety can entirely obviate. Agents will proceed from each society to the same places, they will often arrive at the same time, or one immediately after another, the plans and measures of one will seem to thwart the designs and calculations of the other; and each will meet with many a severe repulse, both from ministers and people, as a consequence of the dread of this apprehended collision, or the dislike of repeated applications for the same object. It is to be presumed, that the conductors of both Societies will always be on harmonious terms; but can it be supposed, that all the agents to be hereafter employed will have such a share of the meekness of wisdom, as to give no offence, in these difficult and constantly varying circumstances? And

if the agents should be perfect, will not partizans arise for one society, who will plead with zeal for a particular mission, or a particular class of operations, to the disparagement of missions under the care of the other society? Will not extravagant encomiums of one provoke disadvantageous comparisons? And will not the efforts of both be thus weakened, and many individuals prevented from giving an efficient and systematic patronage to either? If the missionary exertions of the country should be increased, and the need of greater and still greater resources be felt, the evils here adverted to will be greatly augmented; and agents, instead of pleading the cause of a suffering world with boldness, will be timid and hesitating, lest they should seem to encroach upon the claims of a sister institution.

7. *This measure would greatly promote Christian affection.*

Union of effort in behalf of the heathen world, tends powerfully to increase brotherly love among those, who are thus united. It brings them to be acquainted with the same individuals, acting as their agents and almoners. It fixes their minds on the same objects, and those of the highest interest. It multiplies the subjects of common concern. So far as benevolent feelings are called into action, the amiableness of the Christian character is apparent; and those who behold in each other the lineaments of their heavenly origin, will be the more closely drawn together, the more they are called to act in the same connexion, and for the accomplishment of the same purposes. This tendency of united counsels and efforts assumes a vast importance, when the rapidly increasing population of our country, and our extensive territory, and our capability of exerting a moral influence, are considered.

8. *Such a union is expected.*

There has been, for two years or more, an extensive and prevailing expectation of a union of the two Societies; and this expectation has been grounded on the propriety of such a measure. When the proposal was first intimated in print, it was done anonymously, by an editor not connected with



either institution; and it was given forth as a rumor or suggestion. Yet this unofficial proposal was received with the utmost greediness; and much disappointment was expressed, that the union should be delayed for a single year. How much greater will be the disappointment, if such a union should now be prevented, after the proceedings which have been inserted at the commencement of these pages, and after the cordial approbation with which they have been greeted. Nor is this approbation confined to words. Communications have been received from a distance, stating that greater exertions would now be made, as the paralyzing effect of applications from two societies for the same object, would no longer exist.

After these statements and remarks, the decision may cheerfully be left to the enlightened judgment and conscientious integrity of those, to whom God has given a standing and influence in the American churches. It may not be amiss, however, to add, that if the proposed union should not be sanctioned, very good and satisfactory reasons will be expected for declining it. The proposal was made with entire unanimity, after long consideration, and prayerful attention, and with the approbation of many of the most liberal patrons of the United Foreign Missionary Society. It was received with great cordiality, and the same unanimity, with which it was made. The Christian public have regarded it with great favor, and it is generally hailed as the prelude to more efficient labors, and more extensive and liberal sacrifices, than our country has yet witnessed.

An explanation with reference to one or two subjects, which may seem to require it, will now be subjoined.

Some persons have supposed, that, in case a union was formed, a stipulation would be made, in regard to the place where the executive business of the Board should be transacted. But this does not seem at all necessary. It is a subject, which may safely be left to the wisdom of the Board in all succeeding times. Nothing is therefore said respecting it, in the above-recited terms of union; and it is a somewhat



curious fact, that there is not a single record, either in the doings of the Board, or of the Prudential Committee, which prescribes, or even mentions, the city, town, or state, in which the functionaries of the Board shall reside, or in which they shall transact their official business. So long, indeed, as advantages are derived from the Act of Incorporation, it will be necessary that the Board should have its treasury, and the principal seat of its business, in Massachusetts. Though these advantages are not small, and should not be rashly abandoned; yet, if greater advantages can be gained by a removal of the seat of business to any place without the limits of that State, than can be retained by its continuance there, the Board will doubtless be able to discern the fact, and will decide this question, like every other, with a solemn reference to what shall appear to be duty at the time.

It may be, well to say, for the information of many, into whose hands these pages may fall, that it happened providentially, and without any peculiar attachment to place, or regard to personal considerations, that the business of the Board has been done in Boston. It should be added, however, that this providential disposition of the matter ought not to be disregarded, for the following reasons.

Though New-York is the great emporium of our country, yet, as every merchant knows, there is six times, if not ten times as much direct intercourse between Boston and India, or the Sandwich Islands, as between New-York and the same places. There is also a regular commerce between Boston and the Levant; so that the missionary stations beyond sea are much more easily accessible from Boston, than from any other place in the United States. The same would be true with respect to any missions, on the west and northwest coast of America, the western coast of Africa, the shores of the Persian gulf, the Malayan Archipelago, or any part of Polynesia. The foreign trade of New-York is principally with Europe, the West Indies, South America, and Mexico; whereas the foreign trade of Boston, though less in amount, is carried on with every part of the world; and of

course furnishes the means of conveying missionaries to almost every heathen country, and corresponding with them and supplying their necessities, after their respective stations are formed.

In this connexion it is proper to add, that the friends of missions in Massachusetts have made larger contributions of time and money for sending the Gospel to the heathen nations, and to the destitute of our own country, than the inhabitants of any other State in the Union; and that there are in Boston contributors to these objects, whose unceasing liberality is thought to be not inferior to that of any equal number of men, in similar circumstances, even in Great Britain, or any other part of Christendom. These facts are mentioned merely for the sake of communicating information, and not at all for the sake of blazoning the charitable deeds of men, who had much rather humble themselves that they have done so little, than look with exultation upon what divine grace has enabled them to do. It may be hoped that the time is not distant, when the whole American community will engage, with a zeal equally diffused and pervading every part, in these works of heavenly beneficence. Even then, Massachusetts, considering her dense population and her wealth, will be able to hold a respectable standing, though she should be surpassed by some of the more highly favored States of the Republic.

No anxiety need be felt on this subject. The Committee of the United Foreign Missionary Society frankly declared in the deliberations at Northampton, that they had no other wish respecting it, than that it should always be left to the wisdom of the Board. They added, that the other great religious charities, which have the seat of their operations in the city of New-York, require as much labor and care, as can be commanded, at present, for these services.

It may seem that a brief history of the operations of the Board to the present time, and of the origin and progress of the United Foreign Missionary Society, with an account of the engagements of both institutions, and of the present state of the missions under their care, should form a part of

this document. But it will appear, on reflection, that such an addition would have swelled these pages too much. As the periodical publications of both Societies have presented these topics much in detail, and as these details are copied into many other papers, the necessity of inserting them here is removed.

The preceding statements, explanations, and arguments, are respectfully laid before the Christian public, with earnest prayers that all, who shall be called to act with reference to this subject, may be guided by wisdom from above, and that the glory of God, and the salvation of souls may be promoted by the result of their deliberations.

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*February, 1826.*